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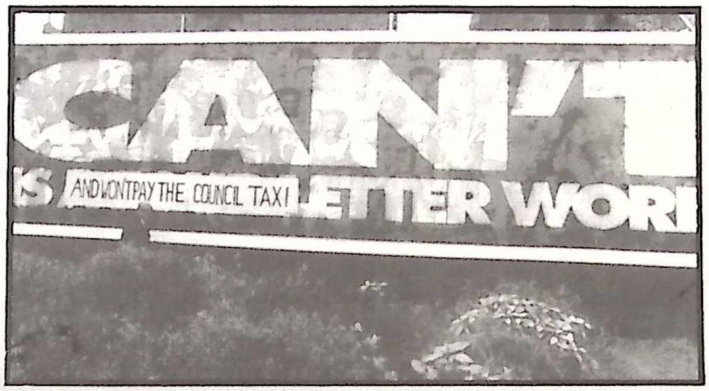
YORKSHIRE
Evening Pest
The paper of *Leeds Class War* MAY 1993 FREE

THE RIP-OFF RETURNS
POLL TAX II - THE COUNCIL TAX

JUST when you thought it was safe to open your mail...

In the face of a massive campaign of non-payment, involving millions of people, the government was forced to abandon the poll tax. But, is its replacement, the Council Tax, any fairer? Is it linked to ability to pay, for example? Is it chuff!



Under the new system, properties are "banded" according to their market value. The higher the band your house/flat is in, the more Council Tax you pay. Fair enough? No, it's not. The actual difference between rates for different bands is very small. So, for example, on average, a household in Adel is liable for only two-and-a-half times the Council Tax of a household in Little London. No account is taken of whether people can actually afford it. Unemployed people are exempt, presumably in an attempt to thwart any organised resistance, but this still leaves a massive number of people who are low-waged, all of whom are fully eligible.

But does the government, and does Leeds Council, believe that people will pay it? Do they expect things to go back to how they were under the Rates? Opposition to the Poll Tax has created a culture of resistance. We have learnt how we can oppose the state and its agents; we have lost our fear of the bailiffs; we have realised how easy it is to resist them.

Local government is still not providing the services we need. Leeds Council is closing down nurseries, cutting libraries and other leisure facilities, whilst spending what money it does have on stupid projects like tarting up the city centre.

Most of us, if we have the money at all, have better things to spend it on than the Council Tax. We won't be paying.

Dangerous New "Wacko" Cult

LEEDS has been targetted by a new and almost dangerous cult. The cult, Militant Labour, is an offshoot of the so-called "siege" cult, the Militant Tendency, and is totally "wacko".

The cult practice what they call "politicising" - bombarding potential recruits with remarkably easy sounding solutions to the problems of modern society, using a mixture of guile and twisted psychology. Once a member is accepted, he or she is let in on the secret that the politics is just a smokescreen to get vulnerable people interested. They are promised a vision of heaven on earth, as long as they follow orders from their leaders. They are convinced that they should give up thinking for themselves and fork out large portions of their earnings - 10% at first, then more as they lose control of their lives - towards funding the cult's activities.

The cult then "control people's minds and convince them that anyone who questions the sect is evil and 'lost'." Then they are sent out to gather more souls.

Among the wilder claims of Militant Labour is that they led the fight against the Poll Tax. Meanwhile, the self-styled leader, Tommy "David" Sheridan, a charismatic Scot, appeared on TV threatening to grass up anti-poll tax activists to the cops.

The cult information centre says the cult goes under several different names, the Tapeworm Tendency, the Narks,...

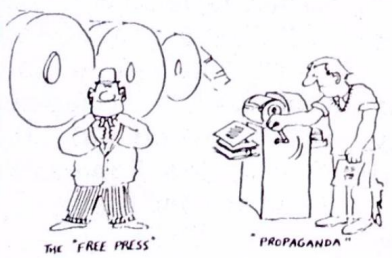
Comment

There is more than one way of reporting any news story. We believe that we live in a society divided along class lines, mainly the workers and the bosses, and that the big newspapers like the *YEP* represent the views and perspectives of one section of society, the rich, such as Lord Stevens, owner of the *YEP*.

We want to present information in our own way; that is, taking sides against bosses, police and landlords. Against anyone who makes our lives miserable. We want to show, in a way that the *YEP*, or any other large circulation newspaper, would never do, that bosses are bastards. We want to expose leeching landlords and the way the police act as the representatives of the rich.

When we get information about individuals treating working class people like shit, we will publish it. We will support working class people taking action against bosses, cops, politicians, landlords and any other parasites, and intend to publish articles reflecting working class direct action.

This doesn't mean that we think the world would be fine if a few nasty people were locked up or sorted out. It wouldn't. In the long term we need to live in a world with no bosses, where we are able to live without getting ripped off, without having to work in shitty jobs or barely survive on the dole.

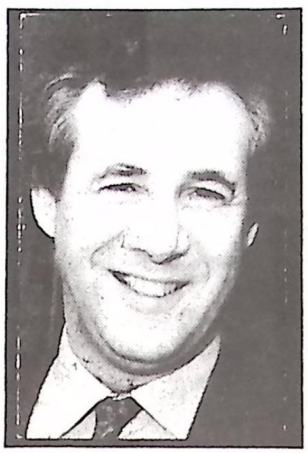


BASTARD LANDLORD OF THE MONTH

THIS month there's no contest at all in our "Bastard Landlord of the Month" spot. Step forward Jon Trickett, leader of Leeds City Council.

The J. W. Roberts asbestos factory in Armley finally closed in 1958, but the poison it spewed out continued to pollute the surrounding area. Between 1976 and 1990, at least 34 people who had either worked in or lived near the factory died of asbestos-related cancer.

In March 1989, over four years ago, the council's housing and environmental health department "discovered" definite asbestos contamination in houses in the Armley Lodge area. Of course, people who lived there had known about it for years without being able to prove it.



TRICKETT - Bastard Landlord

Any normal human being would then have done the decent thing - stop new residents moving in, seal off the area and decontaminate all 840 homes. But councillors are not normal human beings. For the next four years they moved new council tenants into the area without saying a word about asbestos or cancer. Not one word. These are houses condemned by the council's own environmental health officer as "technically unfit for habitation". People may die!

If anyone ever deserved the title of Bastard Landlord, that man is Jon Trickett, aided by his Housing Management sidekick, Malcolm Hargrave. Trickett lives in Beeston, several miles from Armley. He doesn't worry about having to move house or getting cancer. All he worries about is votes.

It's high time Trickett was rehoused. And just to show there's no hard feelings, we're happy to help build him a new home right on top of the old J. W. Roberts factory. In fact we've got the first brick right here and we will be giving it to him personally at the earliest opportunity.

Yorkshire Evening Pest

~~Police Helicopter~~ SURVEY.

We asked everyone we know their opionion of West Yorkshire Police's £1 million plus toy. We received the following responses:

2%: "Well worth it: they should buy another two of them at least"

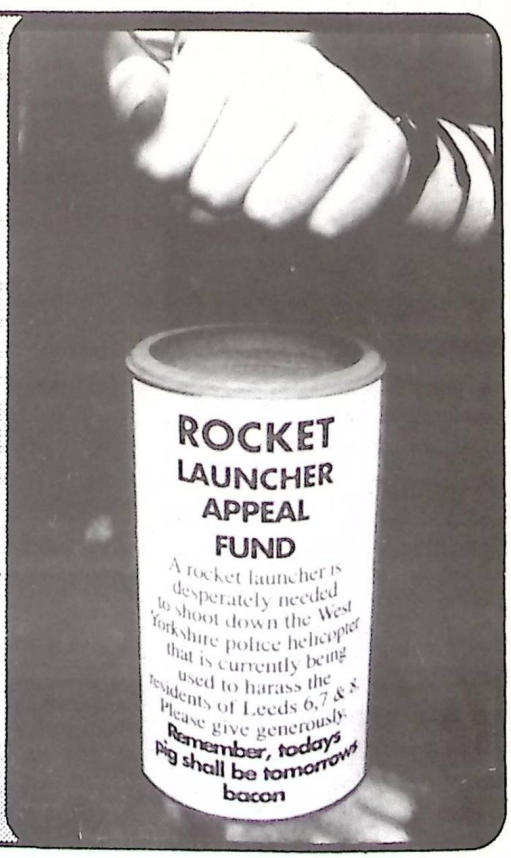
11%: "I'd nick it!"

28%: "Total waste of money"

59%: "We're sick of being hassled by it - bring it down!"

What do you think about the police helicopter? Let us know at:

The Pest, c/o Leeds CW,
Box JAG, 52 Call Lane,
Leeds LS1 6DT.


ROCKET
LAUNCHER
APPEAL
FUND
A rocket launcher is desperately needed to shoot down the West Yorkshire police helicopter that is currently being used to harass the residents of Leeds 6, 7 & 8. Please give generously.
Remember, todays pig shall be tomorrows bacon

Child Support Act

IT'S about time that men started paying out for their kids. So what's the problem with the Child Support Act?

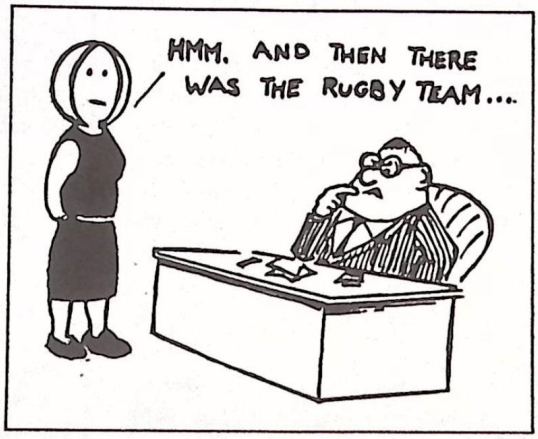
For a start, the mother and her children will be no better off. The money which has been taken from the father is deducted from the mother's income support or family credit. Only the Treasury gains.

Many absent fathers will have second families, a matter which is not considered. With more than one million men unemployed, and another million on low wages, take home pay is not enough to support one, let alone two, families. 20% of absent fathers are on the dole: these, and other low waged men, will be paying a higher proportion of their income on maintenance than better off men.

Even before the Act came into force in April '93, Social Security Officers have been playing much dirtier with single mothers. Women have been threatened and intimidated into giving out information on the absent fathers, in an attempt to force these men into paying out child maintenance.

But, absent fathers aren't going to take being informed on to the D.S.S. lightly. They may take it out on the mother. In many cases the mother will be put in an impossible situation.

Rape situations will be investigated, so that the man responsible can be pursued for maintenance. This may just cause more unnecessary stress for the mother.



Sperm donors will be chased up for money.

Lesbian mothers will be given more hassle and will be placed under a higher risk of having their kids taken from them.

Any voluntary arrangements made between parents can be overturned, making relationships worse and more stressful for everyone.

Black families particularly are being attacked, since almost half of all Afro-Caribbean families are headed by single mothers.

All in all, this is about state snooping and about more state control over adults, and between adults and children.

ALL IS NOT LOST

Like the Poll Tax, the Child Support Act depends upon getting information out of us. The agencies involved, in their stupidity, think they will get all of the relevant information easily.

WRONG - it is up to parents NOT to make it easy. DON'T FILL IN THE FORMS - it will take forever for them to chase up everyone.

If you do end up in an interview, take someone with you. Be prepared - they will be totally insensitive, and will ask very intrusive questions about sex, male friends, etc. They will threaten and intimidate. So get your story right. BELIEVE that you don't know who the father is: you have had more than one partner; it was a one-night-stand; you met him on holiday (abroad); he's left the country; you can't remember his name.

Don't let the D.S.S. hassle you.

Always take a friend.

Make notes in the interview, or use a tape.

Take the name of the officer interviewing you.

If they threaten to cut your money, get advice from Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau.

This Act is not about supporting children. It is about the government making cuts and saving money.

NEWSFILE

Red Bogey

So it is farewell to the Economic League, the people who tell your bosses you're a communist infiltrator if you pick your nose and a red bogey comes out. Good news for all those people wrongly accused of being Reds and suffering hassle at work, or the sack. Bad news for coppers who lose a few bob in backhanders for passing them dodgy info.

Work Death

Weekly sessions in Leeds doctors' surgeries have been set up to help identify and treat work-related illnesses after Leeds Occupational Health Project roduced a report admitting that 'work' kills more than 20 thousand workers in the UK each year. Bring back the rope for bosses guilty of murder, I say.

Leisure

Kirkstall Valley Properties plan to uproot 23 acres of land in Kirkstall to build a supermarket and 'leisure facilities'. This means destroying the leisure facilities already there, e.g., sports fields, which are free, and replacing them with facilities that we will have to pay to use. Not to mention the destruction of habitat for rare birds and small mammals.

Kirkstall Valley Campaign Group is fighting the plans.

Crime

CRIME: it's all around us. In the papers, on TV and on the streets. It's a serious problem, but if we want to get it sorted we have to face facts.

Let's be honest. Crime is a part of our life, it's a way of survival. That's not surprising when 10% of the people in Leeds have got about 80% of the wealth. Whether it's fiddling our gas meters, not paying our poll tax or council tax, or buying knock-off gear down the pub, we're all criminals in the eyes of the law.

But there's crime and there's bad crime. There's nothing wrong with a spot of shoplifting, fiddling the dole or using the phone at work to ring Australia. But there's no excuse for anti-social crime. We're all sick and tired of the rapes, the muggings, the burglaries, the car thefts, the violence. Nothing can justify picking on people who are in the same boat.

So how are we going to stop it? Well, we're not going to hold our breath waiting for politicians or the press to sort it out. Politicians are the biggest crooks of all: people like council leader Jon Trickett, who's quite happy to shove people into homes with lethal levels of asbestos contamination. And when the *Yorkshire Evening Post* mouths off about crime, you can be sure they're not talking about the directors of companies like A. H. Marks in Bradford, who were fined just £7,500 last year for causing the horrific death of a chemical worker.

The police are no better. When they're not watching people die in the Bridewell, they're crying crocodile tears over the latest crime figures. But the truth is that the cops love anti-social criminals: they're the people who keep our communities scared and divided, which is exactly what the cops want. And of course higher levels of crime mean more police with better wages. When was the last time you saw a copper looking for clothes at a jumble sale?

There's no easy solution to anti-social crime. People responsible for it are selfish and ignorant. They do it because they're poor: when you're got no money and no power the easy option is to rip off your neighbour or take it out on your girlfriend. This doesn't excuse it or justify it. But it means anti-social crime won't disappear until we get rid of the society that keeps us poor.

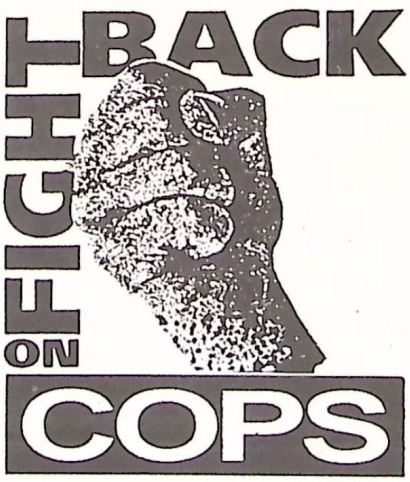
But in the meantime we've all got to start dealing with anti-social crime on our estates and in our communities. The message is clear: don't rob off your own. It's not cool and it won't be tolerated. Let's face it: we shouldn't be taking out our poverty and frustration on each other while the people who run Leeds get off scot-free. So next time you spot someone breaking into your neighbour's car, why not give them directions up to Alwoodley, Adel or Shadwell? Sensible people take their crime to rich areas.

Leeds Class War wants to know what you think. So, if you have anything to say, or if you have any dirt on your boss or any of the other people running Leeds or any stories of how people are fighting back, drop us a line and we'll publish it.

Write to

The Pest,
c/o Leeds CW,
Box JAG,
52 Call Lane,
Leeds LS1 6DT.

The *YEP* seems very keen to get the Leeds-Bradford airport to take night flights, much to the annoyance of local residents. Any info. about why such a special interest would be gratefully received!

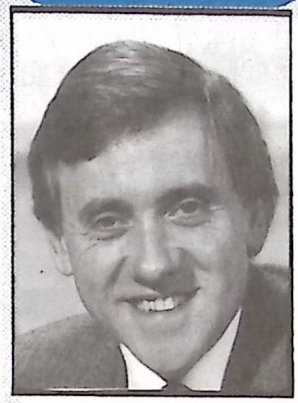


MORE complaints were made against West Yorkshire Police last year than against any other force, apart from the notorious Met. in London.

The Police Complaints Authority investigated 589 cases, of which a massive proportion (438 cases) were for "unjustified use of force" - violence, basically, including attacks by dogs. The force said these figures were "misleading". Of course they are misleading - most people realise that complaining about the police is a complete waste of time, and so don't bother. These figures then are just the tip of the iceberg.

Police in West Yorkshire are probably no worse than police anywhere - coppers everywhere have always used a bit of violence if they have felt they can get away with it. But, these figures, besides winding them up, show again that when it comes to sorting out crime, especially violent, anti-social crime, the police are very much part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

HARRY GRATION LOOKS NORTH WITH LEEDS CLASS WAR



Boys in Blue Make Harry See Red

I recently had the displeasure of interviewing West Yorks top cop Keith Hellawell about the record amount of misbehaviour of his boys, which this year includes 400 charges of assault on the public. His excuse, that they were all malicious prosecutions, seems just a little lame considering that Keith, just a couple of weeks before, admitted on television that he himself used to threaten violence in order to get confessions. Keith said, "I would take my coat off, the criminal would perceive that this act would be followed by a thumping or a fist or something, and that put the person ill at ease and certainly more likely to tell me what they wished to tell me".

Only a few bad apples? Now, I'm not saying all coppers are bastards, but as Judith Stamper used to say, "If they're not bastards, they're in the wrong job".